

Why aren't all Federal Archived Records online?

The volume of materials—paper-based, electronic, and sound and video recordings—is huge.

Laid end to end, the sheets of paper in our holdings would circle the Earth over 57 times!

In addition to all of this paper, we have over 93,000 motion picture films; more than 5.5 million maps, charts, and architectural drawings; more than 207,000 sound and video recordings; more than 18 million aerial photographs; nearly 35 million still pictures and posters; and more than 3.5 billion electronic records. The volume grows at about 1.4 billion pages per year, again not including electronic data and other media.

Creating copies for our web site, and preserving those copies, exceeds our resources at this time.

Online Records Sources Checklist for Archives.gov

Looking for original, or copies of, Federal records on our web site? You'll have to look in several places to be sure you've checked all available sources. Some sources are databases while others are online museum exhibits and publications.

Access to Archival Databases (AAD)

Search or browse electronic records that are highly structured, such as information in databases. The initial release of AAD contains material from more than 30 archival series of electronic records, which include over 350 data files totaling well over 50 million unique records. Go to [AAD](#). [link to AAD main page]

Archival Research Catalog (ARC)

Search among 124,000 digitized historical documents, photographs, and images that are accessible online in ARC. Go to [Historical Documents Online: Search Hints for Selected Topics in ARC](#). [Link to <http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/topics/highlights.html>]

Documents in our Museums' Exhibits

- Have only a minute to spare? See a sample list of [America's Historical Documents](#). [link to the America's Historical Document's main page]
- [The Charters of Freedom](#): the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights [link to Charters main page]
- [Featured Documents](#), including the Emancipation Proclamation, a Letter from Jackie Robinson, and more. [link to Featured Documents main page]
- Browse our many [online exhibits](#) [link to archives.gov Exhibits main page] on archives.gov and see a variety of exhibits relating to American presidents on the [Presidential libraries' web sites](#). [link to NL main page]
- Images of records also are available with associated Teachers' [lesson plans](#) [link to "teaching with documents" uppermost page] and various web pages describing records by research [topic](#). [link to uppermost "Topics" page in Research directory.]

Our Documents

100 milestone documents of American history, from 1776 to 1965. Includes transcripts and large images. Go to [Our Documents](#). [link to Our Documents home page.]

GPO Access

Find the official text of Federal laws, Presidential documents, administrative regulations and notices, and descriptions of Federal organizations, programs and activities. Go to [GPO Access](#). [link to <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/nara/index.html>]

Archives are not only about the actual records but are also about information about the records, so that we can explore the purpose and historical context behind the records' creation. Archives.gov offers lots of sources for this information. If you want to learn about the background of certain records, be sure to explore the following:

Archival Research Catalog (ARC)

Our online catalog of our nationwide holdings located in the Washington, DC area, Regional Archives throughout the country, and Presidential Libraries. You can search by keyword, digitized image, location, organization, person, and/or topic. Go to [ARC](#). [link to the ARC main page.]

Microfilm Locator

This is a searchable database of 3,400 numbered microfilm publications of documents. You can search for microfilm by keyword, microfilm number, Record Group number, and/or location of our nationwide research facilities. Researchers at our research facilities may use this material for free. Our microfilm also is available for purchase or rental through your local library. Go to the [Microfilm Locator](#). [link to the microfilm locator index page.]

Archives Library Information Center (ALIC)

ALIC, part of the National Archives, provides information about American history and government, archival administration, information management, and government documents to archives and records management professionals, the general public, and National Archives staff. Use their online catalog and other resources. Go to [ALIC](#). [link to the ALIC main page.]

Publications

- Visit our Publications area and Start Your Research area for publications about specific topics of interest. Don't miss our [Guide To Federal Records](#) in the Archives of the United States of America. [link to /fed-records-guide/]
- If you are interested in information about Federal records about a certain region of the United States, see [ARC](#) and our web pages for our [Regional Facilities](#). [link to ARC main page and to list of locations if possible.]
- If you are interested in Presidential papers and materials pertaining to the administration of our 20th century Presidents, beginning with Herbert Hoover, see [ARC](#) and our [Presidential Library web sites](#). [link to these main pages.]